



From the Agency Secretaries

We are fortunate to live in a state with rich scenic beauty and abundant natural resources. Since the Gold Rush, California's diverse environmental assets have drawn people to the state and driven the development of the now-fifth largest economy in the world. However, the stresses of continuing population growth and economic expansion challenge our ability to protect public health and environmental quality. Meeting these challenges will require new approaches that rely on better information about our environment.

This report, *Environmental Protection Indicators for California*, presents the foundation for measuring the state's environmental quality in terms relevant to both human and ecosystem health. The indicators in this report provide objective, scientific information by which to assess California's environment and to guide our efforts in sustaining it for future generations.

This report represents an 18-month effort of the California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Resources Agency – two cabinet-level agencies with different, yet complementary, missions to protect the environment. Other state entities, including the Department of Health Services, as well as various other stakeholders, collaborated on its development. Consequently, we have not only established an environmental indicator system, but also have built and strengthened partnerships that will help us achieve our shared goals.

This report is just the beginning of an ongoing process to integrate and use information about the environment in a more meaningful way. In developing the initial set of indicators, we have gained a better awareness of what we know, and of what we need to know, about our environment. In the coming years, the Environmental Protection Indicators for California, or EPIC, Project will work with the Resources Agency's Legacy Project and other related assessment efforts within state government to enhance our capacity to report on California's environment and natural resources and to frame new approaches to solving environmental problems.

We hope this report provides you useful information about California's environment. We are committed to assessing and updating these indicators to ensure that our efforts to protect California's environment are worthy of you, the people of California.


Winston H. Hickox

Secretary for Environmental Protection


Mary D. Nichols

Secretary for Resources